

more effective for this century. Given the challenges we face, America deserves no less.

THE KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE— PAGE II

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the folks I represent down in southeast Texas are concerned about many things; but two things they are concerned about probably the most are jobs and energy, because, you see, in southeast Texas, that's still the energy capital of the United States. I probably represent more refineries than any Member of Congress.

There is an answer to jobs and energy, and it's called the Trans-Canada pipeline, commonly called the Keystone XL pipeline.

The plan is for our allies in Canada to ship crude oil from Alberta, Canada, through a pipeline all the way from Alberta, Canada, down to Port Arthur, Texas. Most Americans have never heard of Port Arthur, Texas, but it sits on the gulf coast, really close to the Louisiana-Texas border. It is part of that energy development going all the way back to Spindletop days in 1901—the energy capital of the world. The plan has been, for several years, to ship that crude oil down to American refineries and have them refine.

That decision, or that request to get a permit, started about 3 years ago, and no decision has been reached yet on whether to build it or not to build it. The latest development is that the administration has decided: Still, we'll not make a decision until 2013, after the elections.

That's unfortunate because these are times when we need American jobs, and this pipeline would create American jobs in America—thousands of American jobs—and then there is related industry all up and down the area where the pipeline will be built to Port Arthur, Texas. Then it will give us crude oil, energy that we can use from a stable ally. Instead of having to ship oil in from all over the world—from the Middle East primarily—we will have a stable ally where we can bring crude oil into the United States.

About how much oil are we talking about?

Well, it's about 700,000 barrels a day. That's just a number—most people can't relate to that. I really can't—but that's about as much crude oil as we buy from Venezuela and bring into the United States. When the pipeline is fully completed, it will be 1,200,000 barrels a day. Now, that's a real number. How much is that? That's about as much oil as we bring in from Saudi Arabia; yet we could bring that in from Canada to our refineries in southeast Texas.

Pipelines are the safest way to move crude oil—the safest way, Mr. Speaker. It's safer than rail; it's certainly safer

than trucks; it's safer than bringing it in on ships from overseas; and it's safer than barges, because pipelines have a history of being the most environmentally safe, as they should be safe. In fact, the new pipelines that are developed are taking newer technology. They put a machine in the pipeline—it's called a pig machine—which goes through the pipeline with the crude oil and looks for dense or even small leaks which would automatically shut the pipeline down. Nobody wants a leak in a pipeline—the people who build it or the people who live in that area—but the administration has decided, primarily the State Department has decided, not to make a decision until 2013.

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The Prime Minister of Canada is very disappointed that the United States will not be a partner in this crude oil development. But there is a country that will take that Canadian crude oil, and it's China. So we may not see the pipeline built from Alberta to Port Arthur, Texas; but we may see that pipeline built from Alberta to their west coast where they could pipe that crude oil off to their west coast and sell it and put it on tankers going to our buddies, the Chinese, who are eager to take that crude oil.

Recently, however, there was a development that the pipeline folks, the TransCanada people who want to build a pipeline, have started to work with the legislature in Nebraska. Nebraska is primarily the holdup where the environmentalists have gone and said they can't build a pipeline here for a bunch of reasons. The new plan is to build that pipeline to the east, the northeast of Nebraska. Hopefully they will work out something. Unfortunately, the State Department said last night or this morning, Well, nothing has changed. So it seems like delay, delay, delay is still the answer.

We need to get crude oil to our refineries somehow. What is the answer? What is the answer for those who say that they don't want a pipeline? There is no answer. And until we get to that green energy that we all want to get to eventually, we have to get that crude oil and have it refined not only into gasoline and jet fuel but into the by-products, plastics that we all use. And the answer, Mr. Speaker, I think is, we need to pick a horse and ride it, sign up, and build that pipeline immediately.

And that's just the way it is.

INCOME INEQUALITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, last month the Congressional Budget Office released a report that examined household income distribution between 1979 and 2007. The most disturbing figure to

me in this report is that the top 1 percent of income earners have seen their average real after-tax household income grow by 275 percent. Middle-income Americans saw an increase of 40 percent over the same period of time.

This report illuminates a sad fact: Income inequality in our country is growing at a staggering pace. The report is pointing out what many of my constituents tell me as I travel around my district from Cumberland to Pawtucket to Newport, from community dinners and talking to business owners: This economy is not working for the majority of middle class families. In fact, the hardworking middle class of our country is being hollowed out, a middle class made up of people that are just trying to provide a good life for themselves and their families. My real fear is that if we let that happen, we'll never get it back.

Those here in Washington need to remember that our job is to help people and to strengthen the middle class of this country. The way back to prosperity is not to ignore the problem; it's through investing in workforce retraining, infrastructure, housing, and education for tomorrow. We can't wait any longer. Now is the time to act. We need to work together in a bipartisan way to get our economy and our country moving again.

I have introduced legislation, the Make It in America Block Grant, designed to help small to medium-sized manufacturers retool, retrofit their facilities, and train employees so they can sustain their current workforce, create jobs, and better compete in the 21st century economy. We need to develop new efficient and effective ways to fund much needed investments in our Nation's crumbling infrastructure, including legislation to create a national infrastructure bank which will attract private investment in vital infrastructure projects.

American families will not feel or share an economic recovery until we stabilize our distressed housing market. We not only need to mitigate our foreclosure crisis but undertake bold actions to prevent the next wave of foreclosures from occurring. Congress needs to pass critical housing legislation, like the Preserving Homes and Communities Act, introduced by Senator JACK REED and Representative ELLIJAH CUMMINGS, which would improve home loan modification programs, including creating an appeals process for homeowners denied a loan modification, limit foreclosure-related fees, and respond to robo-signing misconduct by forcing mortgage servicers to prove they actually have the legal right to foreclose on a property.

I believe that each and every American must be guaranteed access to an affordable higher education, including vocational education, regardless of their economic status. We need to protect the funding of Pell Grants, named for my home State Senator, the late Claiborne Pell, which are one of our

Nation's most significant college financial aid programs. We must also guarantee that our education system is preparing young people for career readiness, which I have worked on to ensure that we're offering more training options to young adults, moving them along on career pathways, and strengthening public-private partnerships so that business and government are working together to build and improve our workforce.

I recommend to my colleagues that they all read this report, if they haven't already. I also ask that they join me in renewing our commitment to keep fighting for middle class families as we work to help our country every day here in the Congress of the United States. It's time to get America back to work and to strengthen and support the hardworking middle class of this country, the hardworking middle class that's built this country.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. It's a sad day in America when a major general in the United States Army cannot give his honest opinion about our war in Afghanistan without losing his job.

Last week Major General Peter Fuller gave an interview in which he commented on the Afghan Government and the President of Afghanistan, Mr. Karzai. And I want to quote the general, Mr. Speaker. These are his words: "erratic and isolated from reality," that is the leader of Afghanistan. He continued by saying: "Why don't you just poke me in the eye with a needle! You've got to be kidding me. I'm sorry, we just gave you \$11.6 billion, and now you're telling me, 'I don't really care'."

That's what our young men and women are doing; they are dying and losing their legs for this erratic leader of Afghanistan.

Let me further state, in a December 8, 2010, Washington Post article, while meeting with General Petraeus and former Ambassador Eikenberry, President Karzai said he has three "main enemies": the Taliban, the United States, and the international community. "If I had to choose sides today, I'd choose the Taliban." Yes, that's the erratic leader our young men and women are dying for.

Just last month during a television interview, President Karzai stated, "If ever there's a war between Pakistan and America, Afghanistan will side with Pakistan."

These are not the statements of a leader for whom United States servicemembers should give life and limb.

On May 12 of this year, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Palmer and Sergeant Kevin Balduf, both from my district, Camp Lejeune and Cherry Point, were in Afghanistan, with the sole purpose to train Afghan officers, when one of

the trainees opened fire and shot and killed Lieutenant Colonel Palmer and Sergeant Balduf as they sat down for lunch. They both were killed by an Afghan trainee. And, Mr. Speaker, these two little girls on this poster are the daughters of Sergeant Balduf, Eden and Stephanie. They're standing at their father's service at Arlington.

The tragedy for these little girls is not just the fact that their daddy gave his life for this country, trying to help the Afghans learn to be policemen; but the day before he was killed, Sergeant Balduf emailed his wife, Amy, and he said, "I don't trust them. I don't trust them for anything, not for anything at all." The next day, he and Colonel Palmer were shot dead by the people that we're spending \$10 billion a month on in Afghanistan. And we're telling the American people, We've got to cut programs for your children and our senior citizens.

I'm asking that President Obama and Congress do everything to defend the truth and encourage military leaders to be honest with the American people as to what is happening in Afghanistan, and I will submit a letter that I wrote to President Obama regarding General Fuller.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward with this debt supercommittee that's going to be making recommendations, I hope that my colleagues in the Republican Party will join those of us, the few of us in the Republican Party, as well as some of the Democrats, and let's bring our troops home before 2014. Yes, when you read in the paper we're bringing our troops home, it's 2014. How many more little girls and little boys have to go to their father's or mother's funeral? Why doesn't America wake up and demand that Congress bring our troops home before 2014?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will close, as I always do, from the bottom of my heart to ask God, please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God, in His loving arms, to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I ask God to bless the House and the Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God and God's people.

Mr. Speaker, last night on ABC, I was so touched to see GABRIELLE GIFFORDS, one of our colleagues, making such a strong effort to come back to the Congress. I wish her the very best in my heart, and I ask God to bless her and her husband.

Dear God, I ask You, please give wisdom, strength, and courage to the President of the United States, where he will do what is right in the eyes of God. And God, please continue to bless America.

NOVEMBER 7, 2011.

President BARACK OBAMA,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT OBAMA: It was with great sadness that I learned that a senior military

officer was relieved of his position for telling the truth. Major General Peter Fuller should receive praise from the American people, not the scorn of military leadership. His comments about Afghan leadership being "erratic" and ungrateful for the United States' financial assistance and military training are correct.

In a December 8, 2010 Washington Post article, while meeting with General Petraeus and former Ambassador Eikenberry, President Karzai said he has three "main enemies"—the Taliban, the United States and the international community. "If I had to choose sides today, I'd choose the Taliban." Just last month, during a television interview, President Karzai stated "... if ever there is a war between Pakistan and America, Afghanistan will side with Pakistan." These are not the statements of a leader for whom U.S. service members should give life and limb.

On May 12 of this year, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Palmer and Sergeant Kevin Balduf, both from my district, were in Afghanistan with the sole purpose to train Afghan officers when one of the trainees opened fire and shot and killed Lt. Col. Palmer and Sgt. Balduf as they sat down for lunch. In an email to his wife shortly before he died, Sgt. Balduf said "I don't trust them; I don't trust them for anything, not for anything at all." These two families quickly learned why.

Mr. President, the day after you visited the wounded at Walter Reed at Bethesda, I went and visited severely wounded Marines from my district, which includes Camp Lejeune. One Marine looked me in the eye and asked why we were still in Afghanistan. I had to tell this Marine and his mother that I did not know, and that I believed it was time to declare victory and bring our troops home before 2014. As of October, 1,812 U.S. service members have died in Afghanistan. How many more families will give a loved one for a corrupt leader?

Maj. Gen. Fuller spoke the truth and does not deserve this fate. As Commander in Chief, I hope you will support and demand the truth for the American people. If our military leaders cannot tell the truth, then America is in deep trouble. Mr. President, you can right a wrong by reinstating Maj. Gen. Fuller to his previous position.

Sincerely,

WALTER B. JONES,
Member of Congress.

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DO-NOTHING OPTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Eight days until the so-called supercommittee is to report. They're limping toward failure; although perhaps now they've found the way Washington always loves to do things—let's kick the can down the road. Let's pretend we did it. Let's say we'll adopt some future tax measures in the next 12 months that will get us to their rather modest goal of \$1.2 trillion of deficit reduction over 10 years. I tell you what, the do-nothing option is starting to look a lot better. Now, that's something that Congress is really good at doing—nothing.

So what happens if we do nothing? Well, first you get the sequestration. There's much gnashing of teeth about that. But Congress will have discretion